

Minutes of the Special Meeting, December 9, 2004

Belmont Senior and Community Center 1223 Ralston Avenue

ROLL CALL – 7:00 P.M.

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Bauer, Mathewson, Metropulos, Feierbach, Warden

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director Ewing, Deputy City Clerk Harrington

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE led by Deputy City Clerk Harrington

Discussion of Options for Relocation of the Emmett House to the Northwest corner of Sixth and O’Neill Avenues.

Community Development Director Ewing gave a brief history of the Emmett House Relocation Project. The Redevelopment Agency (RDA) purchased the vacant lot at the corner of Sixth and O’Neill Avenues in 1994 with RDA Housing Funds. Those funds require that the site be developed for 100 percent housing. Housing Funds were used for flood control improvements at Belmont Creek. The Emmett House was purchased in 1996 and also must be used for affordable housing since it was purchased with Housing Funds; the land it is sited on was purchased with RDA general funds. In 2002, the RDA directed staff to develop a plan to move the Emmett House to the vacant lot at Sixth and O’Neill Avenues. Garavaglia Architects was contracted in 2002 to develop the plan and prepare cost estimates. In 2003, a request for proposal was issued, but a satisfactory bid was not received. A Proforma Analysis was prepared to understand the long term costs of this affordable housing project. The RDA has considered anywhere from one to four units, with each configuration resulting in different fiscal impacts.

Community Development Director Ewing stated that if the Redevelopment Agency relieved the affordable housing obligation, it would cost \$575,000 for the Sixth and O’Neill lot and \$490,000 for the Emmett House.

Michael Garavaglia, Garavaglia Architects, prepared the rehabilitation plan with the goal of maintaining the historic character while planning a new use for the building. He outlined the history of the modifications to the building and shared a historic photograph that the current building will be restored to resemble. He noted the building was originally a residence, is currently used as offices, and will be converted back to residential use. The building overall is in fine shape; high quality materials were used to build it. State Historical Code will be used for the modifications to the building, which will bring it up to current code for that type of property.

Dave Schrier, Cotton, Shires and Associates, geotechnical engineer, stated the key geotechnical hazards of the Sixth and O’Neill lot were ground shaking from earthquakes and potential associated with liquefaction of a very small layer of sandy material, creek bank erosion and

associated slope stability analysis. He stated that if the building was sited within 20 feet of the creek, he recommended drilled piers to reduce the risk of creek bank failure adversely affecting the house. If the house was more than 20 feet from the creek, then he recommended a shallow foundation.

In response to Councilmember Bauer, Mr. Schrier stated there was potential for future creek bank erosion, but steps could be taken to reduce the potential erosion.

In response to Council questions Community Development Director Ewing stated staff had costed out the drilled pier foundation option. He further stated that Mid-Peninsula Housing was not interested in the project if it contained less than three units.

Denny Lawhern, Hiller Street, Belmont Historical Society(BHS), stated BHS supported preserving the Emmett House in either the current location or at Sixth and O'Neill. He thought four units should be approved and did not think the project would generate a significant amount of traffic. He noted there was subsidized housing in his neighborhood and this enabled a few police officers to live in Belmont.

Judy King, Fifth Avenue supported moving the Emmett House and recommended approval of four units.

Bill Trevisan, O'Neill Avenue, requested clarification of staff comments from a previous meeting that indicated the project could initially run in the black and then run in the red. He thought the area should remain zoned R-1 and the property could be used as a parking lot.

Aldo Trevisan, O'Neill Avenue, thought the Emmett House should remain at its current location. He stated he thought that a lot of money has been spent preparing for this project before informing the neighbors. He requested the area remain zoned R-1 and two new houses could be built on the vacant lot. He asked how much project space would be reserved for parking.

Bob Carrillo, Sixth Avenue, stated the project costs were based on 2003 financial numbers and estimated the project would cost closer to \$4 million. He stated the area was not zoned for this project and suggested donating the building or moving it to open space. He stated the city would have long term liability with low income housing. He suggested selling the land and providing loans for housing.

Nancy Oliver, Belvedere Avenue, San Carlos, American Association of University Women and Historic Resources Board for San Mateo County. She noted she was speaking for herself and requested preservation of the Emmett House either at its current location or at the proposed site. She noted there was a vacant lot where the Emmett Store used to be located. She thought the Village Center development was supposed to compliment the Emmett House.

Community Development Director Ewing stated a proforma was prepared by Mid-Peninsula Housing which forecasted revenue increases at 2 ½ percent per year and expense increase at 3 ½ percent per year. It estimated that with a two unit project the expenses would exceed the revenues by the 13th year. He noted these numbers are estimates, and that the numbers change based on the numbers

of units in the building. With a three unit project the revenues would exceed the expenses for a longer period of time; however, a four unit project appears to have a positive cash flow for the foreseeable future.

Community Development Director Ewing noted that the Zoning Code for a multiple unit project required one covered and one open parking space per unit.

Juan de Leon, Mid-Peninsula Housing, stated Mid-Peninsula Housing has a 30 year history and currently manages 5,000 affordable housing units that houses 12,000 people throughout the Bay Area. He stated their projects add value and services to the communities they are located in.

In response to Council questions:

Community Development Director Ewing stated they would need to measure the site the Emmett House was currently located at to determine if they could reconstruct the porch by reducing the width of the driveway that it bordered.

Michael Garavaglia, Garavaglia Architects, stated their project estimate included cost estimate escalation through mid-2004. He noted this type of project rehabilitates the materials that exists on the property and does not use a lot of new construction materials. State Historic Building Code allows for various modifications from current code. They would use a modern foundation and bolt the building to it.

Community Development Director Ewing noted that there is a difference between accessible and adaptable. When a unit is accessible, that means it is fully furnished for handicapped accessibility. When it is adaptable it is not fully furnished, but it is capable of being fully furnished. This project would include one adaptable unit.

Juan de Leon, Mid-Peninsula Housing, stated they have properties in Mountain View that give a preference to people who live or work in Mountain View. They currently have a waiting list of 100 people for these units. He stated that marketing would generate interest.

Community Development Director Ewing stated he would provide the floor area ratio estimates at another time.

In response to **Matt Brite**, Sunnyslope Avenue, Community Development Director Ewing stated there wasn't a current implementation plan for the project, it would be prepared upon direction from the Redevelopment Agency. Some site work would need to be completed before the building could be moved. He stated other potential sites were considered in 2001. There is not a specific plan for the use of the land that the Emmett House currently sits on if the building is moved to Sixth and O'Neill. He stated if the Redevelopment Agency directed the Emmett House moved to Sixth and O'Neill, then the next steps would include entitlements, design review, zoning approvals, bidding the project and then construction of project. The City does not have a policy on what private homeowners disclose when selling their individual properties. He noted the State of California does not allow cities to view affordable housing adversely, and recommended consulting with a real estate agent.

In response to **Aldo Trevisan**, Community Development Director Ewing stated it probably would be cheaper to build two new houses; however, the RDA was making a judgment call to preserve a historic resource.

In response to **Bob Carillo**, Community Development Director Ewing stated the State Historic Building Codes versus the Standard Building code was available for anyone to use, it was not restricted to government use only.

Michael Garavaglia, Garavaglia Architects, clarified that Mr. Carillo had described a change of occupancy use. The State Historic Building Code allows a performance based evaluation for the change of use. Various attributes can be reviewed but the concern was to make the building safe for the occupants and for fire fighters to potentially respond to the building. He also stated the current code would not require fire sprinklers for a building of this size.

Mayor Warden reminded the audience that the purpose of this study session was for discussion and that the item would be continued to December 14 for a decision.

Denny Lawhern requested staff review the residential use of the Emmett House, since his recollection was that the upstairs portion of the building had continuous residential use until 2001.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 8:16 P.M., this Special Meeting was adjourned until December 14.

Sheila Harrington
Deputy City Clerk

Meeting Audio Tape Recorded

Tape No. 596